

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LAGOS 05603 01 OF 02 041319Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00 HA-05
OMB-01 AID-05 /101 W
-----017727 041929Z /41

P R 041108Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8280
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMCONSUL KADUNA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 5603

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, NI
SUBJET: THE FMG BLINKS AND RIMI WARNS

1. SUMMARY: THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT (FMG) TOOK A SIGNIFICANT STEP WEDNESDAY MAY 3 TO DEFUSE WORKER DISCONTENT IN THE CURRENT CRISIS BY SUSPENDING INCREASED PAYMENTS TO THE NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND (NPF). CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (CA) MEMBER MOHAMMED ABUBAKER RIMI ISSUED A SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT IN KANO IN WHICH HE SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT HANDING OVER POWER TO A "CARETAKER ADMINISTRATION." STUDENT LEADER OKEOWO WAS ARRESTED TUESDAY EVENING. UNIVERSITY VICE CHANCELLORS REPORTEDLY ARE MEETING IN LAGOS TODAY TO DISCUSS THE CRISIS. THE FMG'S DECISION ON THE NPF IS SIGNIFICANT AND THE VICE CHANCELLORS MAY RECOMMEND FURTHER STEPS TO EASE THE CRISIS. DESPITE HIS REPORTED RADICAL VIEWS RIMI IS A SHREWD POLITICIAN AND WE BELIEVE HIS STATEMENT PROBABLY REFLECTS THE VIEWS OF AT LEAST SOME

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LAGOS 05603 01 OF 02 041319Z

NORTHERNERS. THE ARREST OF OKEOWO REMOVES THE KEY STUDENT LEADER, BUT ALSO PROVIDES ANOTHER ISSUE FOR STUDENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FMG TOOK A SIGNIFICANT STEP TO DEFUSE WORKER DISCONTENT MAY 3 WHEN COMMISSIONER OF LABOR MAJOR GENERAL HENRY ADEFOPE ANNOUNCED THAT THE

INCREASE IN MAXIMUM PAYMENTS TO THE NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND (NPF) WOULD BE SUSPENDED TO "GIVE THE MUCH NEEDED RELIEF TO WORKERS AS PART OF THE PROCLAIMED POLICY OF GOVERNMENT TO GRANT OTHER TYPES OF RELIEF TO WORKERS IN PLACE OF INCREASE IN WAGES." FORMAL APPROVAL TO DELAY THE INCREASE TO WHICH MINISTRY OF LABOR OFFICIALS AND UNION LEADERS HAD AGREED LAST WEEK WAS APPARENTLY DELAYED UNTIL THE COMMISSIONER'S RETURN FROM THE TUNIS CONFERENCE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY LABOR COMMISSION. THE NEW FEES WHICH HAD TAKEN EFFECT AT THE END OF APRIL INCREASED MAXIMUM WORKER CONTRIBUTION FROM NAIRA 4 PER MONTH TO NAIRA 10 AND ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE SPARK BEHIND BERGER WORKERS DEMONSTRATION ON MONDAY.

3. ALHAJI MOHAMMED ABUBAKER RIMI, MEMBER OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, ISSUED A SURPRISINGLY CRITICAL STATEMENT IN KANO "EARLIER THIS WEEK" WHICH WAS CARRIED IN THE NEW NIGERIAN OF MAY 4. RIMI DESCRIBED THE FMG STATEMENT ON THE RECENT STUDENT CRISIS AS "APOLOGETIC" AND NOTED THAT A GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY A MILITARY GOVERNMENT, SHOULD ACT AND NOT COMPLAIN. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT, KNOWING THE CAUSES BEHIND THE DEMONSTRATIONS, SHOULD IDENTIFY THE CULPRITS AND MAKE THEM FACE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LAGOS 05603 01 OF 02 041319Z

THE LAW, SHOULD PROVE THAT IT CAN BRING THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL, PUNISH THE SABOTEURS AND FIND A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS. "OTHERWISE THE GOVERNMENT MUST RESIGN." HE SAID, "A GOVERNMENT THAT KNOWS THE CAUSES OF PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS BUT FAILS TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THOSE PROBLEMS FORFEITS ANY MORAL RIGHT TO GOVERN."

4. QUESTIONED ABOUT HOW A MILITARY GOVERNMENT COULD GIVE UP POWER, HE SAID THAT IT COULD RESIGN AND TURN OVER POWER TO A "CARETAKER" ADMINISTRATION OF OTHER MILITARY OFFICERS OR A CIVILIAN-MILITARY GOVERNMENT. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS HE ALSO SAID THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO FOLLOW THE ESTABLISHED POLICY TO HAND OVER POWER TO CIVILIANS NEXT YEAR. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS NOT INSISTING ON RESIGNATION:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LAGOS 05603 02 OF 02 050017Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00 HA-05
OMB-01 AID-05 /101 W
-----022077 050021Z /65

P R 041108Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0000
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMCONSUL KADUNA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 LAGOS 5603

HE ONLY WANTED THE GOVERNMENT TO
APPREHEND THE REAL MASTERMINDS BEHIND THE RECENT
DISTURBANCES.

5. PAPERS ALSO REPORTED THAT SEGUN OKEOWO WAS
ARRESTED TUESDAY EVENING. IN THE WORDS OF THE
DAILY TIMES, HE HAS "DISAPPEARED AGAIN. THIS
TIME HOWEVER, HE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE FALLEN INTO
THE COUNTRY'S SECURITY NETWORK." AT THE
SAME TIME THE NEW NIGERIAN REPORTED THAT THE FIVE
LECTURERES ARRESTED IN IBADAN, FOUR REPORTED
EARLIER AND "COMRADE" LAOYE SANDA OF IBADAN
POLYTECHNIC HAD BEEN RELEASED. THEY WERE REPORTEDLY
INVOLVED IN THE ORGANIZATION OF A "NATIONAL
EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE"
APRIL 28 AIMED AT CONDUCTING A PUBLIC INQUIREY INTO
THE CURRENT UNRES. PUNCH ALSO REPORTS THE ARREST OF THREE
LECTURERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR AND THE VICE PRESIDENT
OF THE NIGERIAN UNION OF JOURNALISTS.

6. SKETCH AND PUNCH REPORTS THAT UNIVERSITY VICE CHANCELLORS
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LAGOS 05603 02 OF 02 050017Z

ARE MEETING IN LAGOS TODAY TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION. ACCORDING
TO PUNCH THEY WILL MEET WITH OBASANJO.

7. COMMENT: THE FMG'S DECISION TO SUSPEND

INCREASED NPF PAYMENTS IS A SIGNIFICANT STEP BACK FROM RECENT ECONOMIC MEASURES IN AT LEAST ONE AREA. THIS DECISION AND THE INCREASE IN SCHOOL FEES WERE THE TWO ECONOMIC MEASURES WHICH HAD THE MOST IMMEDIATE WIDESPREAD IMPACT ON THE POPULATION AS A WHOLE. VICE CHANCELLORS MAY ALSO RECOMMEND OTHER STEPS TO DEFUSE SOME OF THE STUDENT PROBLEM WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE GOVERNMENT TO BACK DOWN ON THIS QUESTION.

8. PERHAPS MORE SIGNIFICANT WAS RIMI'S STATEMENT WHICH OBVIOUSLY SUGGESTS AT THE CURRENT GOVERN-

MENT RESIGN. ALTHOUGH KNOWN AS A RADICAL, FROM OUR LIMITED CONTACTS WITH RIMI WE WOULD EVALUATE HIM AS A SHREWD POLITICIAN WHO IS NOT PRONE TO GET TOO FAR AHEAD OF HIS POTENTIAL SUPPORT. HE APPEARS TO HAVE EXCELLENT CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE NORTHERN ESTABLISHMENT DESPITE HIS AVOWED SOCIALIST VIEWS. IN SUGGESTING A NON-VIOLENT ALTERNATIVE FOR CHANGING THE GOVERNMENT, WE SUSPECT HE MAY REFLECT A STRONG FEELING AMONG SOME IN THE NORTH THAT THE CURRENT REGIME, OBASANJO IN PARTICULAR, HAS NOT DEALT SUCCESSFULLY WITH THE CURRENT CRISIS. IN THIS CONNECTION WE NOTE A REPORT WE RECEIVED FROM AN ITALIAN EMBASSY SOURCE CLOSE TO AN SMC MEMBER. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE THERE HAD BEEN A MAJOR CONFRONTATION IN THE SMC BETWEEN YAR'ADUA AND OBASANJO OVER THE CURRENT CRISIS AND OBASANJO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LAGOS 05603 02 OF 02 050017Z

HAD CARRIED THE DAY WHEN DANJUMA SIDED WITH HIM. IF THIS REPORT IS CORRECT, YAR'ADUA AS THE CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE OF NORTHERN INTEREST MAY HAVE REFLECTED NORTHERN DISSATISFACTION WITH BOTH THE CURRENT STUDENT CRISIS AND THEIR DEFEAT ON THE SHARIA ISSUE.

9. FINALLY, THE WIDELY REPORTED ARREST OF OKEOWO CUTS TWO WAYS. ON THE ONE HAND IT REMOVES, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY THE KEY STUDENT LEADER BUT ON THE OTHER IT PROVIDES ANOTHER ISSUE AROUND WHICH THE STUDENTS COULD COALESCE. WE NOTE THAT MEDIA AND CA MEMBERS HAD EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR OKEOWO FOLLOWING HIS SUSPENSION FROM THE CA, BUT WE CANNOT JUDGE THE EXTENT OF THIS SUPPORT. WYMAN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, CIVIL DISORDERS, SPEECHES, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LAGOS05603
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780191-0262
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780594/aaaadcaj.tel
Line Count: 222
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 22ea98a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2795096
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ET: THE FMG BLINKS AND RIMI WARNS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, NI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/22ea98a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014